In the Claims

The claims have been amended as follows:

1. (currently amended) An illuminated exit device comprising:

a door latch mechanism;

a base for attachment to a surface of a door;

an actuator movably mounted relative to the base and connected to operate the door latch mechanism when pressure is applied to the ~~actuator by a person desiring to operate the exit device~~;

a planar electroluminescent illuminator ~~mounted to the exit device and electrically insulated therefrom~~ including an ~~inverter providing high voltage AC power to the electroluminescent illuminator from a low voltage input to the inverter connected via~~ electrical wiring extending through the exit device for connection to a source of ~~low voltage~~ electrical power~~, the low voltage being sufficiently low and the electrically insulated mounting of the electroluminescent illuminator being sufficient for the high voltage AC power to not present a shock hazard to the person desiring to operate the exit device~~;

a planar sign including opaque portions for blocking illumination from the electroluminescent illuminator, the sign being mounted in front of the electroluminescent illuminator;~~ and~~

a transparent protective cover mounted in front of the sign, the illuminator, sign and covering plate forming a sign assembly visibly mounted on the exit device; and

a touchpad mounted on the actuator, the touchpad including a surface cavity in a surface thereof and the surface cavity including a plurality of openings, the transparent cover including a plurality of tabs, whereby the sign assembly is held in the surface cavity by engagement between the tabs of the transparent cover and the openings in the surface cavity.

2. (original) The illuminated exit device according to claim 1 wherein the actuator comprises an elongated push bar.

3. (original) The illuminated exit device according to claim 1 wherein the sign assembly is mounted on the actuator and pressure applied to the sign assembly will operate the exit device.

4. (original) The illuminated exit device according to claim 1 further including a touchpad mounted on the actuator, and wherein the sign assembly is mounted on the touchpad.

5. (original) The illuminated exit device according to claim 4 wherein the touchpad includes a surface cavity in a surface thereof and the sign assembly is mounted in the surface cavity with the transparent protective cover positioned flush with the surface of the touchpad.

6. (original) The illuminated exit device according to claim 4 wherein the touchpad is formed of an electrically insulating material providing an electrically

insulating barrier between the electroluminescent illuminator and other parts of the exit device.

7. (original) The illuminated exit device according to claim 6 wherein the touchpad is formed of plastic.

8. (original) The illuminated exit device according to claim 6 wherein the electroluminescent illuminator is encased in a transparent plastic comprising an additional electrical insulator to provide double electrical insulation between the electroluminescent illuminator and other parts of the exit device.

9. (original) The illuminated exit device according to claim 1 wherein the planar sign comprises an opaque film adhesively attached to the transparent protective cover.

10. (original) The illuminated exit device according to claim 9 wherein the planar sign comprises an opaque paint.

11. (original) The illuminated exit device according to claim 1 wherein the sign includes letters forming the word "EXIT" and/or other verbage in English or other language thereon.

12. (original) The illuminated exit device according to claim 1 wherein the electroluminescent illuminator is encased in a transparent plastic comprising an electrical insulator.

Claims 13-15 (canceled)

16. (currently amended) The illuminated exit device according to ~~claim 1~~ claim 22 wherein the inverter provides high voltage AC power to the electroluminescent illuminator from a low voltage which is suitable for driving electromechanical locks and hardware.

17. (currently amended) The illuminated exit device according to ~~claim 1~~ claim 22 wherein the inverter provides high voltage AC power to the electroluminescent illuminator from a 24 volts AC or DC power input to the inverter.

18. (currently amended) The illuminated exit device according to ~~claim 1~~ claim 22 wherein the inverter is mounted in the base.

19. (original) The illuminated exit device according to claim 1 wherein:

the base includes an opening facing towards the surface of the door on which the base is to be attached, and

the electrical wiring is hidden from view within the exit device and extends from the electroluminescent illuminator to the opening in the base whereby the electroluminescent illuminator may be electrically connected to hidden power wiring in the door extending from an electrical hinge to an opening in the door surface, the opening in the base being located opposite the opening in the door surface to permit connection between the power wiring and the internal wiring.

20. (original) The illuminated exit device according to claim 1 wherein the transparent cover is removable without removal of the exit device from the door to permit replacement or repair of the electroluminescent illuminator.

21. (canceled)

22. (new) The illuminated exit device according to claim 1 further including an inverter for supplying power to the electroluminescent illuminator.

23. (new) The illuminated exit device according to claim 22 wherein the inverter operates to provide a high voltage AC power to the electroluminescent illuminator from a low voltage input to the inverter, the low voltage not presenting a shock hazard.